

Mental Fitness During Uncertainty

**HEAD...
FIRST**

Most people are creatures of habit. When things go as planned, we feel in control. But when life throws a curveball, it can leave us feeling anxious and stressed. This is a totally normal reaction, and many of those around you will also be feeling the same. When we are faced with uncertainty, like the current COVID-19 situation, looking after our mental fitness and wellbeing becomes even more important.

Mental fitness and wellbeing are made up of a combination of things including our emotional, spiritual, physical and social health. When we focus on all four of these areas, we are more resilient and more able to cope with change. The Te Whare Tapa Whā model shows how these four pillars work together to support our wellbeing, made up of:

- Emotional:** Bringing attention to how we're thinking and feeling.
- Social:** Strengthen relationships with our friends, family and community as sources of support.
- Physical:** Looking after our physical body, making healthy choices with nutrition and exercise.
- Spiritual:** Connecting to our whānau, community and/or faith.



Strategies to look after you

Below are some suggestions that can help to look after all areas of your wellbeing, and the wellbeing of your family, during times of uncertainty.

Maintain your routine as much as possible

When you find yourself in a situation with lots of unknowns, maintaining a routine can provide some stability and reduce stress. Try to maintain habits around sleep, eating and training where possible.

Control what you can

Focus on the things that are within your control, even if it's as simple as weekly meal planning or laying out your clothes the night before a stressful day.

Whanaungatanga (connect with others)

Many people withdraw when they're feeling anxious and worried but connecting with people you trust is a great tool and can help you gain a different perspective on certain situations too. Keep up connections through social media, phone, videos etc.

Talk it out

If you're finding it hard to cope, talking to others can remind you you're not going through things alone. Identify someone you trust to share with, that could be a teammate, partner, coach or a mate.

1737 is a free to text and call helpline number for all New Zealanders. You'll find a list of other supports at the end of this resource.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a handy way to create small mental breaks in your day. The research says just 15 minutes a day can have a massive impact on your mood and overall wellbeing.

Want to give it a go? Download the Headspace app on your phone, it's free.

Gratitude

The research shows practicing gratitude can help us deal with adversities and bounce back from them with strength and motivation. Practicing gratitude can be as simple as writing down three things you're grateful for each morning and evening.

Me Ako Tonu (Keep learning)

Take advantage of having more time than usual by seeking out learning. That could be as simple as reading a book, researching something online or chatting to someone about a new topic